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# General Assembly
Fifty-first Session

*Official Records*

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Tuesday, 1 October 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

*President*: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

**Agenda item 9** *(continued)*

**General debate**

**The President**: The first speaker this afternoon is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, His Excellency Mr. Rashid Abdullah Al-Noaimi, on whom I now call.

**Mr. Al-Noaimi** (United Arab Emirates) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to extend to you, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, our congratulations on your election as President of this session of the General Assembly. Your election is indeed an expression of the international community's faith in your competence and vast diplomatic expertise, and of the high esteem in which we hold your friendly country, Malaysia. At the same time, allow me to thank sincerely your predecessor, who so ably led the deliberations of the previous session of the General Assembly.

I should also like to take this opportunity to pay a warm tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the positive and important role he has played in the past few years. My country supports his re-election for a second term and appreciates his efforts to enhance the role of the Organization in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly is being held amid new international circumstances and developments that have both positively and negatively affected the global scene. Despite the relative optimism that has permeated international relations, threats to peace and security and to economic, social and human development worldwide still remain. The present *détente* in regional and international relations does not necessarily mean that the international climate has become more harmonious or homogenous. The security and political independence of small States is still threatened by the ambitions of States aspiring to spread their hegemony and expand at the expense of their neighbours.

The political situation in the Arabian Gulf region during the past two decades has made us increasingly convinced of the importance of rebuilding confidence among the countries of the region. This confidence must be anchored in the principles of full and mutual respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, and of refraining from the threat or use of force. Every State has the right to choose its political, economic and social system, to preserve its natural resources and to resort to peaceful negotiations as a means of settling disputes within the context of bilateral, regional and international initiatives and endeavours.

We also support the peaceful efforts currently under way to complete the demarcation of borders among the States of the region in order to enhance the national

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sovereignty of each State. This will contribute to the achievement of lasting peace, security and stability in the region.

Inspired by our tradition, our history and our commitment to peace, we in the United Arab Emirates firmly believe that the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law are the proper means of settling disputes among nations.

Twenty-five years have passed since the occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of our three islands, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa. These are Arab islands, both in their history and in their origin. They are the pillars of our national sovereignty, territorial integrity and overall inalienable national rights. Since the beginning of the conflict, the United Arab Emirates has called on the Iranian Government to end its occupation of the islands and to enter into bilateral negotiations or seek the arbitration of the International Court of Justice. Referring the case to the International Court of Justice will ensure that each State has a chance to submit the relevant legal and historical documents and evidence to support its claim of sovereignty over the three islands.

Despite our declared peaceful intentions, the mediation efforts of some friendly countries and the good offices of the Secretary-General, the Iranian Government rejected our peaceful endeavours. It has established and equipped facilities on the three islands whose features are not exclusively civilian. It has built an electrical power plant on Greater Tunb; and an airport, a refrigeration plant and a fish-processing plant on Abu Musa. Moreover, Iranian nationals, mostly from the military, have been settled on the islands. We view this as a clear act of provocation aimed at changing the demographic character of the islands and imposing a new *fait accompli*. Through these acts and by ignoring the repercussions of such a policy on the peace and security of the region and on international navigation, Iran has consolidated its illegitimate occupation.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has failed to heed the repeated, serious and sincere appeals made by the United Arab Emirates, the Gulf Co-operation Council, the Arab States of the Gulf, the last Arab Summit meeting, the Council of the League of Arab States and the States parties to the Damascus Declaration to settle the dispute through peaceful means. This violates not only our country's national sovereignty, but also international law and all the international principles, norms and practices governing relations among States, particularly among neighbouring States.

We therefore call on the Government of Iran to dismantle all the illegitimately established civilian and military facilities on our three islands. We also call upon Iran to respond to the peace initiatives we have advanced and which are supported by sisterly and friendly peace-loving countries; to enter into unconditional bilateral negotiations conducive to a peaceful settlement of the dispute; or to refer the case to the International Court of Justice.

Security, stability and sustainable development are urgent needs of societies all over the globe. My country, which has always supported the inalienable rights of peoples to resist occupation and aggression, condemns all forms of terrorism and the acts of subversion and sabotage facing the international community today. In this connection, we agree with and support all the measures taken by the State of Bahrain to preserve its security, its national sovereignty and its political independence.

In this context, we reiterate our full support for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in its fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and against all threats to its national security. We believe that the member States of the Gulf Co-operation Council are bound by the threads of a common destiny defined by the requirements of peace and security of the whole region. Terrorism defies all international norms and practices and runs counter to religious and cultural beliefs, which are the pillars of stability and prosperity for all societies. It must therefore be addressed in an international context.

The United Arab Emirates has followed with grave concern the recent developments in Iraq. We reaffirm the importance we attach to preserving Iraq's national sovereignty and territorial integrity. We oppose any interference in its internal affairs and the establishment by neighbouring States of safety zones on its territory. In the same context, we support all the measures taken by the State of Kuwait to preserve its sovereignty, security and territorial integrity.

The escalating human suffering of the Iraqi people and the spread of disease and malnutrition call for the immediate and full implementation of Security Council resolution 986 (1995). However, the ultimate responsibility for the alleviation of the suffering of the Iraqi people rests solely with the Government of Iraq. This can be realized only when the Iraqi Government

complies fully with its international obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions. Those obligations include the release of all Kuwaitis and other nationals imprisoned or detained by Iraq and the return of all Kuwaiti property still in its possession.

My country supported the Agreement on Principles concluded between the Republic of Yemen and Eritrea on the Hanish archipelago. We renew our call to the two Governments to commit to the principle of peaceful settlement through international arbitration so that peace and security can prevail in this region. We take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Government of France for its mediation efforts.

The United Arab Emirates welcomed the peace negotiations in the Middle East, beginning with the Madrid Conference through the subsequent agreements relative to the question of Palestine. We are disappointed by the position of the Israeli Government, which has not honoured the commitments entered into by its predecessor. The Israeli Government has refused to withdraw from the city of Hebron, and has embarked on an expansion of its illegitimate settlement activities. More recently, it opened a tunnel adjacent to Al-Haram al-Sharif, the Noble Sanctuary, which threatens the structures of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and alters the demographic character and legal status of the city of Jerusalem. This is an act of provocation that will arouse the feelings of Arabs and Muslims, and will obstruct the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace settlement to the Middle East problem and the Palestinian question.

At the Security Council meeting held last week, the international community reaffirmed its solidarity with the Palestinian people, its support of the peace process, and its opposition to all the measures recently taken by the Israeli Government. The United Arab Emirates condemns all the acts of violence recently committed by the Israeli occupying authorities against the Palestinian people, which resulted in firing at and thus the martyrdom of many Palestinians, in addition to the injuries sustained by many more. We call on the Israeli Government to put an end to its barbaric practices, which run counter to the most basic norms of international humanitarian law.

The Arab parties are determined to pursue the peace process as an objective and a strategic option to which there is no alternative. This calls for a reciprocal commitment by the Israeli side, without any further delay or procrastination. This commitment must be proven by the actual, unconditional implementation of all relevant agreements thus far concluded, to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate rights, including their right to self-determination and to the establishment of their own independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital. It must also include full Israeli withdrawal from the Syrian Golan to the 4 June 1967 line, and from southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa, to the internationally recognized borders, pursuant to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), and the principle of land for peace. These measures will guarantee balanced and equitable security for all the States of the region, and realize their peoples' aspirations for a new era of comprehensive economic and social development.

We fully subscribe to the international call for a regional and international nuclear-test ban, and for the establishment of international zones free of all weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. These weapons pose a grave danger to our health, our environment and our natural resources. I recently had the honour to sign, on behalf of the United Arab Emirates, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, thus enhancing its universality. We call upon the international community and the relevant international bodies to spare no effort to make the Middle East and the Arab Gulf region a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The international community must call on Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and to comply with the international safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Despite the efforts and good offices of the League of Arab States and the United Nations to save Somalia from its predicament, the civil war there continues unabated, and the deteriorating humanitarian situation is cause for grave concern. We therefore appeal to the rival Somali faction leaders to shoulder their responsibility and bring this tragic bloodshed to an end. They must set aside their differences and form a national Government representing all the factions of the Somali people, a Government that can restore to Somalia its national unity, territorial integrity, security and stability.

Political developments in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina testify to the importance that the international community attaches to the Dayton Peace Agreement, with a view to restoring normal conditions in the Republic. My country supported that Agreement. We consider it the first constructive step on the road to a just and permanent settlement of the Balkan problem. We

welcome the results of the recent elections in the Republic of Bosnia Herzegovina. We hope that these elections will safeguard the territorial integrity of the Republic and contribute to the establishment of democratic institutions. We also hope that they will help restore normal relations among the Bosnian people and pave the way for reconstruction, following the war's devastation. Peace, security and stability can then return to this tormented region. We take this opportunity to stress the importance of bringing to justice war criminals who have committed heinous crimes against humanity and humanitarian international law in the former Yugoslavia.

The tragic events, raging wars and civil strife, and untold human suffering of the peoples of some African countries, are cause for grave concern. In view of the historic relations that bind our countries together, we reiterate our support for the efforts of the Organization of African Unity in cooperation with the United Nations to contain the conflicts by peaceful means so that their peoples' aspirations to peace, security, stability and development may be realized.

The economic and social gap between the nations of the world is still wide in spite of positive political and economic developments on the regional and international scene, the creation of economic blocs, and free trade in the world. This has led to the exacerbation of poverty, illiteracy and disease in many developing countries. Those countries are already ailing under the heavy burden of debt and debt-servicing, and are suffering from the deterioration of living standards and dwindling development assistance from developed countries, in addition to trade barriers adversely affecting their economies.

The world conferences held over the past five years achieved important results, and their recommendations have become important strategies aimed at creating an equitable and prosperous international environment. The international community, which is still plagued by persistent violence, organized crime, drugs and terrorism, must translate these recommendations into a reality that will guarantee equitable economic and social development and the free flow of trade between the developed and the developing countries.

We firmly believe that this Organization still represents mankind's conscience in the face of lingering world problems. To enhance its role under the Charter, the international community needs to provide the necessary political, financial and moral support to the Organization. We must undertake major structural reforms, enlarge the Security Council membership in accordance with the principle of equitable geographic distribution, and improve the functioning of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the specialized agencies, so that they can respond adequately to current regional and international developments.

I would also like to stress the importance of cooperation, consultation and coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations. These organizations can assist the United Nations to arrive at a better understanding of regional problems that can affect peace, security and sustainable development.

In conclusion, we hope that our aspirations will find proper expression in the commitment by the States of the world to the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law. We look forward to the realization of the noble objectives of this Organization.

**The President:** The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire and former President of the General Assembly, on whom I now call.

**Mr. Essy** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation and I are pleased, Sir, to see you presiding over the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. Your great experience of multilateral diplomacy, along with the apt initiatives which your great country, Malaysia, and you yourself have taken in many focal areas of international relations make you the right person to guide us and to ensure the success of this important session.

I extend my sincere congratulations to your predecessor, Ambassador Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for the outstanding work he did in heading the General Assembly at a difficult time, marked by a financial crisis unprecedented in the history of our Organization. Thanks to his abilities and diplomacy, he helped to preserve the founding roles of this institution, namely the maintenance of peace and of economic and social development, and to guide it towards new areas. We are particularly grateful to him for his excellent work at the last session, which marked the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization.

The delegation of Côte d'Ivoire would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the active and determined part that he has always played in heading the Secretariat, particularly in the areas of peacekeeping and economic and social development. Accordingly, the Côte d'Ivoire endorses the Declaration of African Heads of

State or Government, who, at the thirty-second Summit of the Organization of African Unity, held at Yaoundé, reaffirmed Africa's right to a second term and recommended the candidature of Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Nearly a year ago, on 22 October 1995, a Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly took place, involving 129 Heads of State or Government who had come here solemnly to reconfirm their belief in the ideals of the Charter of the United Nations, namely peace, development, international cooperation, equality and justice, and also to demonstrate their commitment to the reform and modernization of our Organization so that it can take up the challenges of the future. In the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, adopted on 24 October last, we committed ourselves to assuring that we:

> "will give to the twenty-first century a United Nations equipped, financed and structured to serve effectively the peoples in whose name it was established." (*resolution 50/6*)

Encouraged by Ambassador Diogo Freitas do Amaral over the past year, the General Assembly and the Secretariat have advanced on the path of reform for the United Nations and clarification of its objectives and missions. The open-ended working groups of the General Assembly responsible for examining "An Agenda for Peace", the Agenda for Development, Security Council reform, the financial situation of the United Nations, and the strengthening of the United Nations system, have sufficiently progressed in their considerations to allow the greatest hopes as to the restructuring of our Organization, its revitalization with an eye to greater effectiveness adapted to contemporary needs and challenges.

I would add that after a decade of study and reflection on United Nations reform, it is now imperative to proceed with such reform so that we can focus on what constitutes the *raison d'être* of our Organization: its essential missions, namely, the maintenance of peace and security, the promotion of economic and social development, the struggle against poverty, humanitarian assistance, the protection of human rights and democracy, the protection of the environment, dialogue among cultures and respect for diversity.

Concomitant with this progress by Member State towards reform, there has been an equally commendable effort by the Secretariat to correct the Organization's disfunctions, particularly those relating to fragmentation within the United Nations system and the inadequacy of certain coordinating mechanisms, as well as, in some cases, the absence of a rational division of labour, which has led to overlapping and duplication.

I would particularly like to mention, among other things, the progress that has been made towards the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields pursuant to resolution 50/227. On the basis of that resolution, the Economic and Social Council will carry out its work within a rationalized framework that should enable it to attain the objectives assigned to it under the Charter. Its working methods will also be adapted to the necessity of better time management and greater budgetary savings, operating on the basis of a rational reduction in the many outputs of this body, with a view to assuring greater effectiveness. Thanks to this resolution, we should be able slowly to move away from the heavy and spendthrift bureaucracy associated with our Organization.

It is in this spirit that, in anticipation, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was able to reform its working methods, redeploy its people in the field and develop its activities thanks to a fruitful partnership within and beyond the United Nations system, notably with representatives of civil society. This truly remarkable transformation of UNDP over the past two years has enabled it to regain a central role in operational activities for development on all continents, particularly in Africa, where it is steering the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa.

Reform is an act of the will that plays itself out over time. It must be carried out from the inside and under the impetus of Member States. In this regard, we may welcome the evaluation of the Efficiency Board chaired by Under-Secretary-General Joseph Connor, whose work is highly encouraging as to the rational management of the United Nations system.

Thus, all the sectors where overlapping and duplication were most obvious have now been singled out with a view to proper management that will generate substantial economies in the budgetary performance of the Secretariat. Here we would like to say how pleased we are that the Secretary-General was able to hold the United Nations budget for 1996-1997 within the strict limits defined by the General Assembly. The $150 million in savings are the result of a set of measures aimed at rationalizing and maximizing the cost-

effectiveness ratio of the work of the Secretariat, as can be seen in the first report of the United Nations Efficiency Board, which was made public last month.

The new spirit of budgetary strictness and administrative efficiency that is becoming prevalent within the Secretariat and among those in charge of the agencies and programmes of the United Nations system seems to have given us a new awareness of the need for self-examination and for concrete responses to the needs of Member States.

With close links between thinking and operational activities, and with an increasing presence on the ground, the United Nations will be closer to the people, and thus better able to take into account their needs in a number of areas, such as employment, education, health, humanitarian assistance and environment.

Specifically on the question of humanitarian assistance, we should highlight the remarkable way in which the United Nations has adapted in dealing with the refugee problems resulting from internal conflicts in various parts of the world. There are millions of displaced persons, and this situation is without precedent since 1945. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have been particularly effective in this area.

I think these examples are enough to rehabilitate the United Nations in the minds of some. If we were to believe its detractors, our Organization would be bureaucratic, behind the times, ineffective and yet extravagant. While some of these criticisms were perhaps justified to some extent in the past, today we can say that our Organization is moving resolutely towards reform and a structural and functional transformation that started a decade ago.

Last year in San Francisco, 50 years after the founding of the United Nations, the international community reaffirmed at the highest level of leadership the relevance to today's world of the Charter and its purposes and principles. Through this important act, the international community enshrined its commitment to attaining the objectives set out in the Charter. The Declaration of 24 October 1995 also confirmed the essential tasks of the United Nations for the year 2000: promoting peace, development, equality, justice and understanding among peoples. It also gave a special place to the advancement of women and the protection of children.

In order to carry out these tasks, in the last few years Member States have worked out careful strategies through the cycle, ending this year, of thematic conferences that began in New York in 1990 with the World Summit for Children, continued in Rio with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in Vienna with the World Conference on Human Rights, in Cairo with the International Conference on Population and Development, in Copenhagen with the World Summit for Social Development, in Beijing with the Fourth World Conference on Women and in Istanbul with the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). In this connection, we should also emphasize the importance of the upcoming World Food Summit, to be held under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome in November 1996. Complementing these initiatives, the Agenda for Peace and the Agenda for Development provide an appropriate framework for thinking about the important interrelationship and interaction between peace and development.

Along the same lines, and without being exhaustive in my list, I would like to recall the progress made last year in the areas of peace and disarmament with the signing on 24 September 1996 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones in South-East Asia, the South Pacific and Africa, and measures relating to nuclear safety and security are also positive achievements in this area.

In conflict prevention, on the initiative of Canada and the Netherlands excellent progress has been made in developing the rapid-reaction capability of the United Nations to respond to threats to peace and security. Other initiatives from various sources also bear witness to the growing concern over preventing conflicts and acting in advance, particularly in the area of development, so as to create conditions for consolidating social peace in Member States.

With regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms, I would underline the specific, dynamic and publicly visible results of some recent United Nations decisions, such as the establishment of a High Commissioner for Human Rights, the establishment and effective functioning of International Tribunals to prosecute and judge persons accused of serious violations of human rights in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda,

and measures taken, or scheduled to be taken, in combating terrorism and organized crime.

For these reasons, I think we can say that the United Nations is now a much more coherent instrument vis-à-vis its objectives, its missions and its strategies. However, we must complete the renewal that is now under way. I have already stressed that the Secretariat's efforts to adapt, carried out through austerity measures, are healthy, but the dividends should be used to strengthen operational activities for development.

The other central organs — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council — must make continued, deeper-going transformations to update their structures, their functioning and their working methods and adapt them to special circumstances that are unlike the post-world-conflict circumstances of 1945.

In this connection, and with particular regard to the General Assembly, I should say, as I did when I presided over the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, that this body, within the context of the institutional balances provided for in the Charter, should continue to play its full part in the reform process under way. The General Assembly, because of its unique form of legitimacy, is still the best guarantor of the common interests of the Member States.

As this fifty-first session begins, we find ourselves at a crossroads. Last October we resoundingly reaffirmed the irreplaceable nature of the United Nations. Today, showing political will and above all a spirit of solidarity, we must now translate that commitment into action. Without this reaffirmation of solidarity, the values on which the international community rests will become rather meaningless. Our Organization must tirelessly continue to seek ways of strengthening this solidarity. We do not see it as much as we would like to, and the frustration of developing countries is growing because of situations in which international cooperation targets are simply disregarded and many promises remain unkept.

It is one thing to establish aid programmes and time-frames, but it is another to move ahead and actually do what the international community has committed itself to do. Of course, the United Nations is often judged by international public opinion on the basis of its ability to consolidate peace. But its credibility also depends on its ability to act firmly in order to fill the increasingly wide gap between the rich and the developing countries.

It is high time that development aid found its place in an effort to mobilize, in which the actors, the industrialized countries and the developing countries all get their fair share. One cannot talk simultaneously about the existence of universal values, such as democracy or human rights, and still feel satisfied with a situation in which poverty and the AIDS epidemic are steadily gaining ground, thus exacerbating the divisions within the international community and thwarting national efforts.

In this context, the effort to combat AIDS must be a subject of particular concern because of its devastating world-wide effects, especially in developing countries, where 90 per cent of HIV-positive individuals are located — 60 per cent in Africa alone — but which do not have the resources to deal with this pandemic. On the question of access to medicines, particularly anti-retrovirus agents, it seems unacceptable to us that such preventive medicines are available to only 10 per cent of those suffering from AIDS/HIV.

However, also within the context of international cooperation to combat AIDS, we welcome some strong action that has been taken. For example, we welcome the Economic and Social Council resolution making the question of AIDS as one of the topics for its 1997 high-level segment. We would also place great hope in the commitments made to provide the Secretariat with an appropriate structure and relevant resources to support the United Nations AIDS Programme.

I would like to speak more about Africa, as many representatives already have, because the picture painted is often very far from the reality. There is little in common between the usual cliches about the wretched situation in Africa and the velvet revolution which our countries are engaged in carrying out. We have suffered from the scourge of the economic crisis which has spared no continent. We have suffered from the globalization of the economy, in which we have been marginalized. We in Africa are now beginning to reverse this trend. All the specialists agree that Africa has set forth on the path to economic recovery, with an average growth rate last year of 5 per cent.

For my own country, Côte d'Ivoire, I can say that after the 1980s, which were marked by a difficult economic and financial crisis, the Government adopted a coherent economic policy, backed by thorough sectoral strategies to obtain viable, strong, self-sustaining growth. Stabilization and adjustment programmes begun in 1993 enabled the Côte d'Ivoire to meet the conditions in 1994

for a recovery with greater diversification in our economy, greater weight being given to the private sector and careful management of public finances, and a re-centering of State control in the areas of regulation monitoring and in the environment of economic activities. This policy enabled us to achieve a 7-per-cent growth rate in 1995, and suggests that we can achieve double-digit growth in 1998, which is the goal of President Henri Konan-Bédié, whose plan is to make Côte d'Ivoire a truly industrialized nation.

Along with efforts to win the fight for development, African countries have also committed themselves to democratization, as can be seen, *inter alia*, in the organization of multi-party elections, the establishment of the rule of law and the emergence of a responsible civil society. Backed up by true legitimacy, political leaders are about to succeed in building modern States with the primary purpose of ensuring national cohesion and progress.

The advances that we see here and there on our continent must be backed up by more sustained action by the industrialized countries. Time is running out, and we must move quickly from speeches, promises and good intentions to concrete action. The adoption of the Agenda for Development ought, therefore, to be an opportunity for re-thinking the philosophy underlying development assistance, its mechanisms and its modalities, so that socio-economic activities can be placed at the centre of the work of the United Nations.

**The President:** I now call on the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, His Excellency Abdul-Rahman Mansouri.

**Mr. Mansouri** (Saudi Arabia) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me pleasure, as we begin the work of this session, to convey to you, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, our sincerest congratulations on your election to the presidency of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. Your assumption of that important position reflects the appreciation of Member States both of your personal qualities and of the positive role your country plays in the international arena. We wish you success in fulfilling your mission and assure you of our readiness and desire to cooperate with you fully in achieving the objectives of this session.

I wish also to take this opportunity to congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for his effective guidance of the affairs of the General Assembly last session, which witnessed the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization.

I would also like to convey my sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who manages the affairs of this international Organization with exceptional ability and competence in a rapidly changing world. In order to deal with increasing expectations regarding the present and future role of the United Nations, we consider that a renewal of his tenure will provide him the opportunity to complete ongoing plans and efforts to reform the United Nations and to restore its constructive role in the international arena.

A year has passed since we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. That celebration, attended by many world leaders, gave us a valuable opportunity to recall the importance of the role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security and in enhancing international legitimacy. It also provided us with an opportunity to review the Organization's accomplishments and challenges over the past 50 years.

The current session of the General Assembly marks the beginning of a new era for the United Nations, which we hope will witness a consolidation of its role on the international scene to the benefit of Member States and in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter. It is our firm belief that this international forum can play an extremely important and effective role in managing crises, in averting wars and conflicts, and in providing the means for international cooperation. This obliges us to be more persistent than ever before in supporting this institution and enhancing its constructive role.

The changes which have occurred in the world over the past decade are so dramatic that they have created a new international reality with a host of new challenges. These developments offer new opportunities to bolster the principles of the United Nations for the benefit of strengthening international legitimacy including justice and equality among nations, the rejection of the use of force in the settlement of conflicts, the preservation of the dignity of mankind, and providing security and prosperity for all. We should also recall the fact, to which many world leaders referred during the fiftieth anniversary celebrations, that the ability of this international Organization to resolve global problems, crises and conflicts depends greatly on the political will

of Member States to abide by the principles of the United Nations. It is our hope that the future will witness greater determination by Member States to ensure the achievement of the objectives upon which the future of our Organization depends, a future which is also ours.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is fully cognizant of the importance of reforming United Nations bodies so that they may fulfil their prescribed roles and deal effectively with the global changes we have witnessed in recent years. Among these bodies, the Security Council, as the principal organ directly concerned with the maintenance of international peace and security, remains the focus for reform. My country's view was and remains that any changes to the structure of the Security Council should be geared towards enhancing its ability to accomplish its role effectively as stipulated in the Charter and to refrain from any action that would limit its effectiveness in fulfilling its purposes.

Arab leaders, at their summit meeting in Cairo last June, expressed their firm commitment to continue the peace process which they regard as an irreversible strategic goal. The Cairo meeting reaffirmed that the realization of a just and comprehensive peace within the realm of international legitimacy presupposes a serious and unequivocal commitment by Israel to abide by the principles of the Madrid Peace Conference and Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), as well as by the land-for-peace formula. The Arab leaders also reaffirmed that any breach by Israel of these principles and agreed-upon commitments and agreements, or any delay in their implementation, would result in a setback to the peace process, with all its dangerous consequences.

We view with great concern the Israeli Government's failure to demonstrate a degree of seriousness and commitment to the peace process comparable to that demonstrated by the Arab States. Since assuming office, the Government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has continued to issue statements and undertake actions that do not serve the cause of peace. In contrast to the Arab States' commitment to the Madrid principles, to Security Council resolutions and to the land-for-peace formula, the statements made by the Israeli Government indicate an insistence on consolidating of its occupation of Arab lands; maintaining its annexation of East Jerusalem; and delaying the agreed-upon redeployment of its troops from Al-Khalil. We are also concerned by the Israeli Government's continued closure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, together with its proclaimed rejection of withdrawing from the Syrian Golan Heights. Recently, the Israeli authorities opened a tunnel under the Al-Aqsa Mosque. This was a flagrant infringement upon the Islamic sanctuaries and a clear violation of binding international resolutions on the status of Jerusalem. We welcome Security Council resolution 1073 (1996), which the Council issued after the events that resulted from the Israeli measures. We hope that the summit conference sponsored by the President of the United States of America will help with the implementation of that Security Council resolution and give momentum to the peace process on the basis of that resolution and in accordance with its principles.

Statements by the Israeli Prime Minister that Israel is prepared to resume negotiations without preconditions are no more than an attempt to distance himself from the Madrid-based principles and fundamentals of the peace process, in particular the land-for-peace formula. Such a position can only mark a serious setback. Hence, we call upon the United States of America and the Russian Federation, as the co-sponsors of the Madrid Peace Conference, to do their utmost to continue the peace process on all tracks in order to reach the desired results.

In this context we value the positive and constructive positions on this matter reflected in the Florence statement of the European Union and the Lyon statement of the Group of Seven. Furthermore, we reiterate our call to all parties concerned to fulfil their commitments to provide economic assistance to the Palestinian people. While we call upon members of the international community to increase their economic assistance to the Palestinian Authority, we should remember the need to deal with actions undertaken by the Israeli Government which might prevent the Palestinians from benefiting from this aid. Moreover, any efforts to achieve regional cooperation will be meaningless and ineffective unless accompanied by tangible progress in the peace process on all its tracks.

We are greatly concerned about the issue of Jerusalem — Al-Quds Al-Sharif — which is at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict and is of utmost concern to the Arab and Muslim world. The manner in which this issue is dealt with could determine the future of the peace process. We regret to see the Israeli authorities continue their measures aimed at changing the demographic composition and creating new realities in the status of Jerusalem with the intention of prejudicing the negotiations on the final status of the city. We believe that in any settlement of this issue Israel must take into consideration internationally binding resolutions legality,

in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), which calls on Israel to withdraw from occupied Arab territories, and 252 (1968) pertaining to Al-Quds Al-Sharif. We also believe that any settlement should take into account the importance of the repatriation of Palestinian refugees and the release of Palestinian prisoners who have been detained in violation of the Declaration of Principles, international law and the Geneva Conventions.

The honourable and firm stand taken by the international community following the brutal Iraqi aggression against the State of Kuwait in 1990, including the adoption of a series of historic Security Council resolutions to repel the aggression and restore to the State of Kuwait its legitimacy and sovereignty, constitutes the kind of firmness we hope the United Nations will always demonstrate. The position of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on this issue is unwavering, and is based on two fundamental principles. So long as the Iraqi Government has not fully complied with the internationally binding demands set out in Council resolutions, the problem will not be solved and the suffering of the Iraqi people will not be mitigated. This is a matter of deep concern for all of us.

We believe that recent developments in northern Iraq could have adverse effects on the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, since certain neighbouring countries have in various ways attempted to interfere in the Kurdish conflict. In the light of these realities, we have to be very careful lest the situation lead to a collapse of the international coalition which is responsible for full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions, the foremost of which relate to the release and repatriation of all prisoners of war and detainees from Kuwait and other countries, the return of stolen assets, compliance with the mechanism for compensation, and full cooperation with the efforts of the United Nations Special Commission to oversee the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. These are the objectives the international coalition should strive to fulfil, bearing in mind the need to avoid any measures that might damage the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

*Mr. Agathocleous (Cyprus), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

The Government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques expressed great interest in efforts to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East, including those aimed at keeping that sensitive part of the world free of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. In this perspective, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia actively participated in the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) held in New York last year, and welcomed the efforts that have led to an agreement on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

We believe in the need to make the NPT more effective and universal through the activation of the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency. We also see a need to adopt measures and criteria that would enhance all aspects of the process of dismantling weapons of mass destruction in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1 (I), which addresses, *inter alia*, the issue of eliminating all weapons of mass destruction. In this respect, we urge all States that have not yet become parties to the Treaty to take the necessary steps to do so, thus contributing to the maintenance of world peace and stability.

The occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates — Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb — is a source of great concern, not only to the United Arab Emirates, but also to the States of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as a whole, which desire the best possible relations with their neighbour, Iran. We have repeatedly urged the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond to the call of the United Arab Emirates to settle this long-standing problem peacefully through serious bilateral negotiations. Consequently, we reiterate our call upon the Government of Iran to cease imposing a status quo by force and to halt preparations for unilateral construction on any of the three islands. Furthermore, we also call upon the Government of Iran to initiate efforts to resolve this dispute peacefully in accordance with the norms and principles of international law, including the referral of this matter to the International Court of Justice. In view of the persistence of the conflict, the Security Council should place this issue on its agenda.

Based on the determination of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to maintain the security and stability of the Arabian Gulf region, we support the wise actions of the State of Bahrain to foster its security and stability. These actions were approved and supported by the GCC and the League of Arab States, since the security of the State of Bahrain is part and parcel of the security of the GCC States.

Nearly 10 months have passed since the signing of the Dayton Agreement, which brought an end to the violence and destruction that accompanied the Serb

aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina. This Agreement did not materialize until the international community expressed sufficient will and firmness to stem the Serb aggression. We hope that the recent elections will mark a new beginning and a new future of peace, stability and economic development for the country. Nonetheless, we must point out that the peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina will remain fragile until it takes root. The reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the international support necessary to help it address the problems resulting from years of war should be viewed as conditions of peace without which the goals of the Dayton Agreement can never be realized. It is also important to emphasize the need to apprehend and bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against humanity and to ban them from any political office in the future. Their apprehension is an international responsibility that should not be taken lightly. It is also incumbent upon the international community to confront any attempt to divide the country along ethnic or religious lines.

Helping Bosnia and Herzegovina set out on the road to peace early this year was the first of a series of positive developments in many troubled areas of the world. We hope that the recent announcement of an agreement between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front will mark the end of confrontation between the Philippine authorities and their Muslim minority after a long period of tension and conflict.

As for the conflict in Chechnya, we hope the current truce and reports of the Russian Government's intention to withdraw its forces from the area will pave the way for a resolution of this crisis.

Unfortunately, the statuses of other conflicts have not changed. The Pakistani-Indian dispute over Jammu and Kashmir is still tense and complicated. There is no alternative to following the peaceful path based on the resolutions of the United Nations guaranteeing the people of Jammu and Kashmir the exercise of their right to self-determination.

The situation in Somalia remains desperate. The country is awaiting a decision by the clan leaders on a process to save the country and its people. We urge all factions to put aside their differences and shoulder their national responsibilities by forming a national authority representing the different factions of the Somali people in order to restore unity, stability and security to that country.

In Afghanistan — in spite of all the sincere efforts of the United Nations and all the good offices of the Government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to achieve national reconciliation in that country — the fighting still rages between the different factions as a result of disagreements between their leaders. This has prevented the country from enjoying the fruits of its victory against foreign occupation.

The issue of international terrorism was the main topic throughout last year. Many conferences and workshops addressed ways and means of confronting this growing phenomenon, which has become a source of grave concern for the international community. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, recognizing the need to confront and address this serious phenomenon, has voiced its support for all international efforts to confront this problem. This position was illustrated collectively in the statement issued by the Gulf Cooperation Council following its last session. The GCC States have emphasized that extremism, violence and terrorism are global phenomena that are not limited to a specific people or region and have unambiguously denounced and condemned all forms of violence and terrorism. They also expressed their support for all international efforts aimed at preventing and combating terrorism, including denying safe haven to terrorists anywhere and making efforts to apprehend, convict and severely punish those involved in such crimes.

A cursory review of world economic problems and the role of the United Nations in overseeing international economic cooperation shows that the success of the United Nations in dealing with economic issues and promoting international development has also been tied to the commitment of Member States to the United Nations Charter.

Although the international community has succeeded, by dint of serious negotiations, in resolving many difficult problems and has achieved important results in many sensitive areas through the establishment of the World Trade Organization, we are still concerned by the continuing practice of trade protectionism, which runs counter to our belief in the importance of allowing market forces to play their natural role in economic affairs. It is also necessary to free international trade from certain restrictions, such as that of using the pretext of protecting the environment as a justification for protectionist measures. Such restrictions undermine the economies of developing nations and have a negative

impact on their development, which is the cornerstone of their peace and stability.

The Secretary-General has taken a commendable initiative in this direction with his "An Agenda for Development", which, given concerted effort, could become a realistic tool for enhancing global economic and social development. Here, the developed countries in particular bear a special responsibility for building fruitful cooperation to the benefit all countries, rich and poor. We believe that an increase in the amount of assistance provided by developed to developing countries is a cornerstone of such hoped-for cooperation.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a founding Member of the international Organization and a signatory of the San Francisco Charter, is eager to have the United Nations continue to play its leadership role in strengthening collective security. It reaffirms its responsibilities as a founding Member of the Organization. This reaffirmation was reiterated in a speech by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd Bin Abdul-Aziz, which was delivered on his behalf by His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin Abdul-Aziz, Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence and Aviation, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. Today, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia takes this opportunity to reconfirm its continued commitment to achieving the objectives of the United Nations Charter. It will spare no effort to enhance the capabilities of the United Nations in order to achieve justice and to promote security, stability and prosperity throughout our troubled world.

The Holy Koran provides us with guidance to lead us towards creative actions, as exemplified in the following verse:

> "And say: 'Work righteousness.
> Soon will God observe your work,
> And His Apostle, and the Believers.'"
> *(The Holy Koran, IX:105)*

**The Acting President:** The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mauritania, His Excellency Mr. Lemrabott Sidi Mahmoud Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

**Mr. Lemrabott** (Mauritania)(*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to convey to the President, on behalf of my delegation, my warm congratulations on his election to the presidency of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. We are convinced that his personal qualities, experience and great skill are our best guarantee for the success of this session and will enable us to achieve positive results.

I should also like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude and esteem to Mr. Freitas do Amaral, President of the fiftieth session, who so ably guided the work of the Assembly last year.

I should also like once again to extend our entire confidence to our brother, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and to express to him our thanks for the great efforts he has tirelessly expended since shouldering his heavy responsibilities in strengthening the universality and credibility of the United Nations and enhancing its capacity to play its rightful role, notwithstanding particularly difficult international circumstances.

It is gratifying to note that, as the Organization enters into its second 50 years of life, substantial progress is being made on the road to peace throughout the world.

Thus, East-West confrontation, more commonly known as the cold war, has ended and the spectre of the balance of terror has disappeared, giving way to dialogue and cooperation in the establishment and maintenance of world peace and security. Other important steps have also been taken towards decolonization, the eradication of racial discrimination and the full exercise by peoples of their right to self-determination.

We must, however, note that these achievements, valuable as they are, have not contributed significantly to improving the situation in many parts of the world where, in some countries, there are still hotbeds of tension and bloody wars. Nor have they sufficed to eliminate the poverty and underdevelopment that are still the daily lot of a large proportion of the inhabitants of our planet.

Thus, developing countries continue to suffer the combined effects of the world economic crisis and the ongoing deterioration of terms of trade and to bear the burden of an external debt that exhausts their resources at the very time that official development assistance is constantly decreasing.

The past year has seen no important improvement in the world economic situation. That conclusion is unavoidable, since the current economic crisis has as its basis the inequity inherent in the world economy, an

inequity whose major consequences are macroeconomic imbalance, unfair terms of trade and inequality in the distribution of wealth.

In this framework, the African continent is obviously the hardest hit by the negative effects of the deterioration in economic conditions owing to the burden of its external debt and the fall in the prices of the raw materials that make up the principal source of income for most African countries.

The Sahel region is among those on our continent that is suffering the most from this situation, especially given the chronic drought from which it has suffered for over three decades and that has weakened and sometimes destroyed the economies of its component countries.

However, we are gratified by the increased interest shown in recent years with regard to African development and we welcome the System-wide Special Initiative for Africa launched by the Secretary-General, which we would like to see implemented as soon as possible.

The consolidation of democracy and the construction of a State based on the rule of law and respect for human rights are positive results of the activities of the international community, as reflected in the resolutions of the United Nations and its specialized agencies as well as in the decisions and recommendations handed down by several conferences organized under United Nations auspices or with its support. This confirms the importance of the collective effort of the United Nations and should encourage the Organization to continue its pursuit of the noble objectives of mankind.

In that connection, and in order to enable the United Nations to strengthen such action, it is particularly urgent and essential to work on the restructuring of its organs, the rationalization of its working methods and the improvement in its performance.

To that end, my country supports the proposals designed to give renewed dynamism to the Economic and Social Council, to end duplication in its subsidiary bodies and to improve its rules of operation. We also support proposals aimed at enlarging representation in the Security Council in keeping with the requirements of democracy, transparency and equity.

We also believe that the principle of equality among Member States should be the basis for any action undertaken to restructure the Security Council, which, according to Article 24 of the United Nations Charter, acts on behalf of all Member States. This means that the Council has an obligation to reflect the universal character of the United Nations.

Allow me to say a word about the democratic process in Mauritania, the first phase of which began 10 years ago in 1986 with the first local elections and was followed by the adoption of the 1991 Constitution. Pluralistic, multi-party presidential and parliamentary elections followed in 1992 and the second round of local elections in 1994. This process is being strengthened once again by the holding on 11 October of the second round of legislative elections in a free and transparent climate. Two hundred and sixty-nine candidates, most from 13 political parties, will appeal to the voters for the 79 seats of the National Assembly. All provisions have been made to ensure that this election takes place under the best conditions.

With this new achievement, the Mauritanian people will confirm that it has become, as stated by His Excellency President Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, "the source of sovereignty and legality" and the master of its own destiny and affairs.

Having won the struggle for democracy and achieved the institution of the rule of law and the guarantee of all individual and collective rights, Mauritania is engaged in another, equally determined struggle against economic and social underdevelopment. In this regard, many economic reform programmes have been implemented since 1985 within the framework of a liberal policy incorporating all development dimensions and designed to raise the living standards of citizens and making basic services available to them.

These reforms have allowed us to reinvigorate public finances, overcome inflation and restore continued growth. Many projects have also been carried out in the areas of communications, transportation infrastructure, village electrification, expanded water-supply networks and increased health-care coverage. Let me express our appreciation to all of the brotherly and friendly countries, institutions and non-governmental organizations that have supported my country's efforts towards these goals and thank them for the aid they have provided and continue to provide.

Strengthening democracy and economic and social development requires the consolidation of peace and security both for States and individuals. We must

therefore note the striking paradox, despite the end of the cold war and new hopes for peace and justice, of the re-emergence of terrorism, instability and the proliferation of hotbeds of tension around the world.

The Middle East is one region where, unfortunately, this paradox is most alarming. My country, renewing its full support for the peace process, remains convinced that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and the principle of "land for peace", adopted at the Madrid Conference, remain the bases for any comprehensive, just and lasting peace in that region.

We also believe that there can be no real solution to the Middle East problem as long as Israel has not withdrawn from all the occupied Palestinian territories, including the Holy Arab City of Al-Quds, the Golan and southern Lebanon.

We had therefore welcomed the new era that seemed to have emerged with the signing on 13 September 1993 of the Declaration of Principles on the autonomy of Gaza and Jericho and other positive advances that followed, especially the 1994 Cairo agreement, the peace Agreement between Israel and Jordan, and the Taba Agreement on the implementation of the second phase of the Declaration of Principles, signed in Washington on 28 September 1995. We had hoped that the Palestinian people will soon see the end of its tragedy by recovering its legitimate right to self-determination and to establish its independent State on its territory.

On this basis, and in order to ensure the continuation of the peace process, the concluded Agreements must be implemented and commitments undertaken must be honoured. Negotiations must resume among all the concerned parties on the basis of the principles arrived at and accepted by all and in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. My country also insists on the need to lift the embargo imposed on the brotherly Palestinian people, the devastating consequences of which on the fledgling Palestinian economy and the repercussions of which on security in the Palestinian territories could endanger the peace process.

Finally, we invite the two sponsors of the peace process to assume fully their responsibilities in order to allow the people of the region to recover their legitimate rights and to open a new chapter in the history of this subregion, so that its potential can be put to the service of economic development and social advancement.

Nearby, the aftermath of the Gulf War continues to raise obstacles to the normalization of the situation in that region. In this regard, my country has always affirmed and wishes to reaffirm today its dedication to respect for international legality and the United Nations resolutions pertaining to the Gulf War and its consequences. We reiterate our rejection of any threat to the independence of Kuwait and its territorial integrity and we call for the settlement of the question of Kuwaiti prisoners.

We also reaffirm our consistent position of rejecting any action threatening the unity of fraternal Iraq and the integrity of its territory. We call for the lifting of the embargo imposed on the Iraqi people, which is subjecting them to famine and disease. In this regard, my country wishes to see implemented, as soon as possible, Security Council resolution 986 (1995) on the issue of oil for food. We also wish to express our rejection of the plan being entertained by some of Iraq's neighbours to create a safe area in northern Iraq, in contradiction to their declared dedication to territorial integrity and unity and in violation of the principles and rules of international law and the United Nations Charter.

My country believes that the United Arab Emirates has the inalienable right to recover its full and complete sovereignty over the islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb. We reiterate our support for the United Arab Emirates in its endeavours to recover its rights by all available means.

In the Arab Maghreb, the question of Western Sahara is a consistent source of great concern because of its threat to stability and security in the subregion. My country also believes that the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, should, now more than ever, assume its full responsibility for the implementation of the settlement plan, in keeping with resolutions adopted to that end on the holding of a free and impartial referendum that will make it possible to achieve a comprehensive and definitive solution to the question of Western Sahara and to ensure security and stability in the region. For our part, we continue to be prepared to contribute positively to the achievement of that aim.

With regard to the embargo that for several years has affected the Libyan people, my country wishes to see greater receptivity to Libya's obvious willingness to cooperate with the United Nations and other concerned parties, in seeking a solution to the crisis between it and certain western countries. We call for the lifting of this embargo — which is hurting the Libyan people and all

the peoples of the Maghreb — and hope that the proposal of the League of Arab States, which enjoys broad support, will open up new opportunities to put an end to it.

With regard to security and stability, Africa continues to face major problems. Conflicts are spreading death, famine and epidemic throughout the continent. In Somalia, the war continues to leave a train of death and destruction and the international community, despite the solidarity it has shown in the past through its involvement, no longer evinces much interest in a situation that is threatening the Somali people. We hope the Somali people will overcome their differences and find a way to conduct a constructive dialogue.

In Liberia, we hope that the peace process will continue, in keeping with the Abuja Agreement, and we reiterate our support for the decisions taken by the ministerial ad hoc Committee of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) at its seventh session and the decisions and recommendations of the last two summits of the Organization of African Unity and ECOWAS on Liberia, so that peace and harmony may return to that fraternal country.

We hope that our Rwandan and Burundian brothers will, in their countries, resolve their conflicts and seek dialogue and understanding in solving their problems. We also hope that they will be able to face the challenges of development and devote to it the energies now being devoted to their differences.

With regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina, my country expresses satisfaction at the important advances made along the road to peace, especially the recent democratic elections. We reaffirm also the need to continue implementation of the Dayton Agreement and to see the international community exert the necessary effort for the reconstruction of that country, whose infrastructure has been destroyed and whose people have suffered the most horrifying forms of aggression.

The United Nations must adapt to the world as it is and to the changes it undergoes. The Islamic Republic of Mauritania wishes to reiterate its willingness and commitment to work in concert with other Member States towards the realization of the noble goals of our Organization, in particular the consolidation of peace and security in the world.

At a time when most third-world countries are facing enormous challenges that hamper their advance towards greater progress and prosperity, and while our planet is facing environmental challenges that threaten the future of all life on Earth, considerable resources are being devoted to the production, refinement and acquisition of weapons of mass destruction of all kinds, while official development assistance continues to decline.

In this respect we hope that the recent Treaty prohibiting nuclear tests will be one important step along the way to complete and general disarmament, the only way to free up the necessary resources for the development of the third world.

Today, more than half a century after the creation of our Organization, we must be fully aware of our common destiny. We must dedicate ourselves to promoting mutually advantageous international cooperation and bringing about effective solidarity equal to the challenges we face to ensure a better future for all humankind.

My country, as in the past, will continue to work towards the strengthening of friendly and brotherly relations among all peoples and nations in the pursuit of the noble ideals aspired to by the founding fathers of the United Nations.

**The Acting President:** I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, His Excellency Mr. Seymour Mullings.

**Mr. Mullings** (Jamaica): May I, on behalf of the delegation of Jamaica, convey to Mr. Razali Ismail our warmest congratulations on his election as President of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. In so doing we pay tribute to his country, Malaysia, which is linked to Jamaica by close ties of friendship and collaboration and which continues to play a prominent role in international affairs. I would assure him of the full support and cooperation of the Jamaican delegation in the deliberations on the many important issues before us.

I should like to congratulate your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for the able manner in which he guided the work of the fiftieth session. Let me also express appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his untiring efforts to promote peace and development.

There are many who, with good reason, approach this fifty-first session with a sense of despair and deep concern about the future of the United Nations and the vital mission that it must undertake on behalf of the peoples of the world. They look back at the promises and the pledges made during the fiftieth anniversary celebrations and try to reconcile these lofty messages with the continuing crisis being faced by this body and the difficulties confronting the multilateral system.

Rather than dwelling on the missed opportunities and the difficulties that have confronted us, my delegation would wish for this Assembly to recognize the imperative need for effective global action in the pursuit of the goals of international peace and security, economic and social well-being, and justice for all. In so doing, we must all reaffirm our commitment to the principles on which the United Nations is based. Our Prime Minister, P. J. Patterson, and other world leaders joined in renewing the collective commitment to these principles at last year's Special Commemorative Meeting.

The fundamental goal of the United Nations is the achievement and preservation of international peace and security. We have witnessed in recent times the end of the cold war and the dramatic reduction in East-West tensions. At the same time, we have witnessed the tragic emergence of horrific levels of ethnic tension, regional instability and intra-State upheavals, which have threatened international peace and security. These have severely tested the mettle of the United Nations system and the community of nations as a whole.

The challenges to peacemakers and peacekeepers in this period have been many. We must, today, recognize the successes that have been achieved through combined multilateral and regional action in the spirit of the Charter. A functioning multilateral system should work effectively to restrain aggression and the exercise of military power. We must resist tendencies towards unilateralism which are unhealthy and negative signs for the international system. We must insist that the established mechanisms for conflict resolution and decision-making in relation to issues of multilateral security are upheld.

Jamaica and sister nations of the Caribbean joined the international community in mounting a United Nations Mission in Haiti that brought an end to the wanton violence and the tragedies at sea that characterized the period of military dictatorship in that country.

The return of democracy has brought renewed hope, opportunity and optimism to the people of Haiti. These sentiments can be sustained only if we continue to help the Government and people of Haiti to overcome the obstacles that still confront them in this quest. It is important that the United Nations Support Mission in Haiti be given the means necessary to enable it to meet its objectives. It is even more critical that the international community commit itself to providing the technical and financial resources necessary to assist Haiti to achieve economic and social development.

The nations of the Caribbean seek to maintain a climate free of tension and confrontation. We seek the normalization of relations, which will reduce the atmosphere of uncertainty and the dangers of confrontation in the region. We seek this in an atmosphere of respect for sovereign rights and a commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes. We reject the extra-territorial application of national legislation, which is inconsistent with international law.

Within the wider Caribbean, we continue to pursue the goal of regional integration through the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Association of Caribbean States. It is our objective to achieve the creation of a Caribbean zone of peace and cooperation. We are united by a common determination to remove the barriers that divide us and to protect the precious natural heritage that we share. For this we have to engage the active participation of all countries in the region.

We wish to commend the efforts of African Governments and the Organization of African Unity to overcome the grave difficulties that Africa has been experiencing. We particularly welcome the initiative for a conference on peace, security and stability in the African Great Lakes region. We can only hope that, through a comprehensive approach, lasting solutions can be found to the situations in Burundi and Rwanda. We reiterate our strong support for the efforts of the international community to implement the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa.

We are encouraged by recent events in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which have paved the way for elections in that country, and look forward to the restoration of stability and a harmonious relationship among its people.

We support the position that the Middle East peace process should be consolidated and proceed on the basis of the principles already agreed and accepted by all parties. There should be no turning back. Peace is attainable if the parties approach negotiations in a spirit of accommodation and compromise, and recognize their common interest in ensuring stability and mutual respect for each other's rights. We hope that the talks, which begin today at the invitation of President Clinton, will lead to a speedy agreement among the parties.

While the United Nations must focus critical attention on the crises caused by conflict and violent confrontation, it must never lose sight of the root cause of instability and tension — poverty, deprivation, hunger and disease. It is in the depth of human misery that the swords of anger and division are most quickly unsheathed. A commitment to the goals of peace and security is meaningless without a commitment to fostering sustained economic growth and sustainable development, and to waging war on poverty and human misery.

The emerging global economic environment gives us cause for both optimism and grave anxiety. Phenomenal economic growth in a few countries is contrasted with decline and stagnation in the majority. An increasingly affluent world coexists with a huge and marginalized underclass. This polarization is reflected both internally and externally.

A failure to address inequities can and will inevitably lead to what the 1996 Human Development Report so graphically describes on page 8 as

> "a world gargantuan in its excesses and grotesque in its human and economic inequalities."

For many low-income countries that lack adequate access to development capital and other resources, official development assistance remains a critical but diminishing source of support. Moreover, the problem of external debt is also a burden for many of these countries. Agreed arrangements have proved inadequate in alleviating debt burdens, and alternate strategies still have to be found.

It is against this background that Jamaica continues to insist that achieving sustained economic growth and sustainable development must remain a priority objective of the global agenda. In the series of global conferences ending recently with the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Governments demonstrated their ability to collaborate in analyzing socio-economic and environmental problems.

Taken together, these conferences represent deliberate efforts to define a framework for development cooperation and multilateral commitments. These global forums have raised the level of awareness of development issues. We should now not allow inertia to take over. It is essential, therefore, that we honour the commitments and meet the internationally agreed targets emanating from these conferences. Their success depends on political will and the provision of adequate resources to ensure follow-up and implementation.

The 1997 special session devoted to the assessment and review of the implementation of Agenda 21 and the results of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio will provide an ideal opportunity for the international community to assess progress in carrying out the agreed commitments.

For small island developing countries, the review process is of great significance, and we hope it will provide the momentum fully to implement the Barbados Programme of Action.

Governments, including my own, have created their own framework for implementation at the national level. Jamaica has embraced the concept of sustainable development, and our policies have been oriented towards achieving these goals.

The main challenge faced by small island developing States is to find the resources to develop a programme that is designed to reduce the vulnerability of their economies and generate economic growth and development. This envisages a systematic approach to the categorization of island developing countries by specialization or socio-economic performance.

The Uruguay Round agreements, on which the World Trade Organization is founded, provide the framework for a liberalized multilateral trading system.

Many developing countries are unlikely to benefit in the short term from the Uruguay Round agreements. Structurally weak and vulnerable developing countries require favourable arrangements and equitable terms and conditions to enable them to make the necessary adjustments to participate successfully in world trade.

Free trade must never be viewed as an end in itself; it must be a vehicle for development. It is for this reason that the World Trade Organization recognizes the need for special and differential treatment for developing countries and waivers for special trading regimes. This must be respected in both letter and spirit.

We are of the firm view that no action should be taken to erode our vital interests or remove equitable and long-standing arrangements that affect the very economic survival of some developing countries. In this context, I refer to the current action by a coalition of powerful special interests with respect to the special terms enjoyed by a number of developing countries through their arrangements with the European Union. It has been made abundantly clear that the removal of preferences would have a serious negative impact on the economies of Jamaica and other Caribbean countries.

My delegation therefore calls upon those who would seek to use the World Trade Organization as an instrument to attack the very foundation of the economies of small developing States to desist from this course of action. The thoughtless assault upon the Lomé Banana Protocol is of great concern to my country and to sister Caribbean banana producers, which stand to suffer economic devastation if the selfish acts of these powerful interests are allowed to succeed.

The trend towards globalization is irreversible, but not all of us are capable of making the adjustments necessary in the short term to cope with its consequences. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has an important role to play in assisting developing countries to meet the challenges brought about by globalization and liberalization and to facilitate their integration in the world trading system. In this regard, we welcome the renewed vigour of this body, as exemplified at the ninth session of UNCTAD, where Governments reaffirmed the relevance of UNCTAD's mandate as the focal point for dealing with trade and related development issues.

It is necessary to examine and assess the United Nations system and its capacity to respond to political and humanitarian emergencies. The United Nations must begin to link peace-keeping and peacemaking in a more coherent and consistent manner. We note the work in this regard taking place in the Assembly's Informal Open-ended Working Group on an Agenda for Peace. We recognize the need for a rapidly deployable unit and support the efforts to put this in place.

An important step was taken in the field of disarmament recently with the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Jamaica regards the CTBT as an incremental step and looks forward to the next stage, which is the adoption of a programme to achieve the ultimate goal of complete nuclear disarmament. Those States with nuclear capabilities have a responsibility to carry out their obligations in good faith not only in regard to nuclear testing, but also with respect to non-proliferation.

The problem of drug abuse and illicit traffic in narcotics continues to pose a serious threat to society. The extent of drug abuse and drug trafficking shows that it transcends national and geographic boundaries. National commitment and international cooperation are therefore required to address this problem. It is against this background that Jamaica strongly supports the convening of a special session of the General Assembly in 1998 to address the illicit trafficking in and use of drugs. At the same time, we must recognize the impact of related criminal activity, which is spawned by the illicit drug trade. Of particular concern is the nexus between drug trafficking and trafficking in arms and high-powered weapons. We urge those States that are producers of these arms to be more vigilant in enforcing control over their distribution and illegal export.

Since we met last year, significant developments have occurred with regard to the implementation of the Convention on the Law of the Sea. With the completion of elections to the various institutions of the authority, the International Seabed Authority is now operational. We congratulate Secretary-General Mr. Satya Nandan on his election and express our confidence that his leadership and guidance will enable the Authority to discharge its mandate. It is vital that adequate resources be provided in order to ensure that the Authority becomes firmly established.

We also take this opportunity to welcome the historic election on 1 August of the members of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. We look forward to the inauguration of the Tribunal in its host city of Hamburg later this month. This will be another landmark in the process of the implementation of the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

We should note the tremendous achievements of the United Nations in the progressive development of international law. A significant number of instruments have been concluded that provide the legal underpinnings

of the multilateral system. It is a dynamic process which is helping to bring more order to international relations. The creation of an international criminal court is among the latest initiatives on which substantive work has been done. Jamaican experts have participated actively in the progressive development of international law. We are ready to contribute further to the machinery of the international legal system.

To respond to a multitude of challenges, the United Nations needs to be renewed and revitalized. There is a strongly shared perception that we must proceed expeditiously with the task of bringing about the much-needed reform of the United Nations system in the collective interest. The initiative to restructure and improve performance, productivity and the cost-effectiveness of the United Nations system is an important one. The adoption of resolution 50/227 — which contains further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations system in the economic, social and related fields — is evidence of the efforts to improve the operational aspects of the work of the system. Jamaica is committed to working with other Member States throughout this session of the General Assembly to continue the process of strengthening the Organization.

The persistence of disputes and conflicts suggests the need for strengthening the United Nations machinery for dealing with these problems. The Security Council, which under the Charter of the United Nations holds the mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security, has an important and strategic role to play in the process. As we all know, aspects of its composition and role are currently under review. Certainly, it is acknowledged that we should be moving in the direction of greater democratization and increased participation by Member States in critical decisions affecting the international community. The expansion of the membership of the United Nations and the significant changes in the political and economic conditions in Member States must surely be important factors in determining changes in the composition of the Council and the status of its members.

Jamaica is not committed to any rigid formula for change, but whatever formula is arrived at should satisfy the need for democratic participation consistent with the sovereign equality of States and with the equitable distribution of seats. The need for reform should be matched by increased political will to use the machinery of the United Nations for the peaceful settlement of disputes and to cooperate with conciliation efforts under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

Reform must not be for its own sake. The purpose of reform must be to strengthen the capacity to deliver responsive and responsible leadership on questions of peace and security, socio-economic development, human rights and environmental protection.

We understand and support the need for reform of the administrative and management process in the system, but what we cannot accept are unilateral actions to force reform by withholding assessed contributions to the United Nations. This has brought the Organization to the brink of insolvency and is hampering the very efforts being made for reform and restructuring. More critical are the serious consequences for the development programmes of the United Nations.

The current crisis will not be resolved until Member States pay their arrears and assessed contributions promptly and without conditions. At the same time, we recognize the need to examine carefully the existing formula for contributions. The establishment of any new formula must be based on the principles of equity and the capacity of Member States to pay.

The agenda of issues before us at this session shows that there is a great deal to be done. In many areas, we have made progress, even if it has been slow. It is essential that we continue to make the effort, through discussion, debate and negotiation, to find solutions that remove from our world the threats of war and conflict and the pain of poverty and misery. Through our joint efforts we can make progress, reach compromises and arrive at solutions that will make our world safer and give each and every one of us a greater stake in the future.

**The Acting President:** The next speaker is the Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, His Excellency Mr. Omar Mustafa Muntasser.

**Mr. Muntasser** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Mr. Razali Ismail on his election as President of this session of the General Assembly. His assumption of that high post is a tribute to him personally and to his country, Malaysia, with which my country has good relations and close ties enhanced by bonds of friendship and cooperation. My delegation is confident that his political experience and diplomatic skill will help us in achieving a successful session. He has taken over

the presidency from his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Diego Freitas do Amaral of Portugal. I should like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to him for the way he conducted the affairs of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali has shown great skill in conducting the affairs of the Organization by virtue of his long experience, his wide knowledge of world affairs and his grasp of the substance of regional conflicts. That is why he enjoys our full support in continuing at the helm of the Organization. Since he enjoys worldwide support, as expressed by several regional organizations, we are confident that the Assembly will support his reelection to the post of Secretary-General of the Organization so that he may continue the process he started in the field of restructuring and strengthening the United Nations and enhancing its role to enable it fully to shoulder its responsibilities in realizing the purposes of the Charter, namely, the establishment of peace, justice and equality and the promotion of development.

This session is convened in the aftermath of important events and in the midst of vast developments. The Fourth World Conference on Women achieved good results. Attempts are being made to overcome economic difficulties, promote development, and eliminate phenomena that threaten the environment.

It is a good omen that this session is starting at a time when optimism is rising as a result of the progress achieved in settling the dispute in the Balkans. But if satisfaction at such happy developments has been widespread, concern has deepened over the persistence of chronic disturbances and the eruption of destructive civil wars. To confront these events, which threaten international peace and security, the international community must exert greater effort to contain such disturbances and wars.

In this context, it is essential to remove the obstacles hampering the implementation of peace agreements in Angola and Liberia. A definitive solution must be implemented for the ethnic disputes in Rwanda and Burundi. The brotherly people of Somalia continue to suffer from long-standing problems. They expect our support for a reconciliation that would meet the needs of all Somalis and respond to their hopes and aspirations. An end should be put to the suffering of the brotherly people of Iraq by lifting the sanctions, maintaining the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq and desisting from premeditated attempts to impinge on its sovereignty and its freedom in decision-making.

My country is extremely concerned at the latest developments in Iraq. The United States aggression against Iraq is a violation of its sovereignty and an interference in its internal affairs. We have confirmed and confirm again today that Iraq has the right to territorial integrity and to exercise sovereignty over its entire territory. For the United States of America to consider that Iraq's exercise of its sovereign rights constitutes aggression, at a time when Iraq is being subjected to United States aggression, is reverse logic that must be denounced and condemned by the international community.

The conflict in the Middle East, with the question of Palestine at its core, has been among the priority issues at the United Nations for more than half a century. Now, despite all the talk about the peace process, the fact remains that the Palestinian people continue to be displaced from their homeland. Those who remain are oppressed by the Israelis by collective siege and random deportation, in total disregard of international denunciation of such practices and in complete defiance of the international will, which supports the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people and calls for respect for international decisions calling for the full realization of all the rights of the Palestinian people, in particular their right to return to their homeland and their right to self-determination.

As we have seen ever since the usurpation of the land of Palestine by the Israelis, the fact is that occupation and expansion have always been a constant policy to realize israeli ambitions. Their settlement activities increase daily. Their jails are filled with thousands of prisoners. Houses are demolished for no reason. Rash Israeli statements that the Palestinians have no right to a State of their own are often repeated, along with acts of aggression against southern Lebanon. The Israelis are also perpetuating their occupation of the Syrian Golan. They persevere in the judaization of Jerusalem, including their designs to demolish the most important Islamic shrine, namely, the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque.

These Israeli actions prove that the Israelis do not want peace. Their joining the so-called peace process is nothing more than a smoke screen to hide their attempts to impose their will on the Arab nation and make it bow

in submission, thus setting a seal on their occupation and their sense of superiority.

My country has publicly declared that the current so-called peace arrangements will not lead to a genuine and lasting solution. Events have proved the validity of our analysis and the depth of our vision. Just, true and comprehensive peace will not be achieved so long as the Israelis are shedding the blood of the Palestinian people. Peace will not be sustainable under the shadow of Israel's nuclear terrorism and its obstinate denial of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Peace can come only through the return of the Palestinians to their homeland and the establishment of an independent, democratic State in Palestine, with Holy Jerusalem as its capital and where Palestinian Arabs and Jews would live on an equal footing — similar to what has happened in South Africa. Anything other than that solution would ignore historical facts and lack realism, and would only lead to more bloodshed and keep the area as a pocket of tension where nobody enjoys peace or security.

Five years ago, three western countries — the United States of America, Britain and France — accused Libyan citizens of involvement in the Pan American flight 103 accident and the incident involving the French union de tranports aérens (UTA) flight 772. Despite the fact that those who unleashed those accusations never submitted any proof or evidence to support their claims, my country has declared its readiness to uncover all the facts related to the two incidents. We started an investigation of those whom the American and the British authorities claim are involved in the Pan American flight 103 incident.

My country has also called on the authorities in these countries to assist with the investigation. Instead of responding to this request, which falls within the legal framework of the dispute, the three countries have fully politicized the problem, resorted to the Security Council and imposed Council resolution 731 (1992). Despite all this, and out of our keen desire to settle all aspects of the dispute, the Jamahiriya announced its acceptance of that resolution and took practical measures in response to it.

The Jamahiriya has condemned international terrorism in all its forms and has declared its commitment to any measures to be decided by the international community to combat terrorism. Libya's vehement determination to secure the total eradication of terrorism is reflected in the civilized proposal contained in document A/46/840, which calls for the convening of a special session of the General Assembly to study the causes and dimensions of this phenomenon and devise the means that would eliminate it.

The Jamahiriya has also cooperated with the Government of the United Kingdom in uncovering the elements accused by Britain of involvement in terrorist acts. In the statement, circulated in document S/1995/973 of 20 November 1995, the British informed the Security Council that Libya's answers to their queries about the relationship with the provisional Irish Republic Army were satisfactory and conformed with their expectations.

Furthermore, Libya has cooperated with the French investigating magistrate who visited Libya during the period 5 to 16 July 1996. During that visit, the Libyan authorities provided him with all the facilities he needed to conclude his mission. Later, French statements paid tribute to the positive cooperation of the Libyan authorities with the French magistrate.

The Jamahiriya has proposed several solutions for the trial of the two Libyans suspected of involvement in the United States plane's accident. It has proposed that the two stand trial before a court whose venue should be agreed upon. Libya has also proposed recourse to the International Court of Justice after the United States and Britain refused to apply the Montreal Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation of 1971, despite the fact that both countries are parties to the Convention. Libya has also accepted the proposal submitted by the League of Arab States, which calls for trying the two suspects at the headquarters of the International Court of Justice in The Hague, before Scottish judges and under Scottish law.

These proposed solutions which were either submitted or accepted by the Jamahiriya have been confirmed on more than one occasion and before several forums, including this Assembly. This is a sufficient response to those who claim that Libya refuses to permit the trial of the two suspects, and especially to President Clinton, who said in his statement on 23 September that Libya refuses to surrender the persons responsible for the explosion of Pan American flight 103. Libya has no objection to the two suspects standing trial. The only thing that Libya wants is to guarantee them a neutral and fair trial, free from any media or political influences. We ask this especially because officials in both Britain and the United States, in their statements, have claimed that the two Libyan citizens are guilty and should be punished, indicating that a conviction is pre-ordained before any investigation and before any court appearance.

The Jamahiriya's handling of the dispute has been widely supported internationally and by Arab and African countries. The Organization of the Islamic Conference has declared its solidarity with our position. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries supported it at Jakarta and reaffirmed that support at Cartagena. It was also strongly supported by the Arab Summit at Cairo. The Organization of African Unity has repeatedly supported it, from the 1993 Cairo Summit through the latest Summit at Yaoundé.

When the three countries were confronted by these positions, which confirmed the firm conviction that Libya has indeed responded to the requirements of Security Council resolutions, they started to drag other issues far removed from the dispute and its context. Both Britain and the United States are trying to evade responsibility for fabricating the problem. They have been attempting to depict the dispute as one between Libya and the international community. Is this not a reversal of the facts? How can the dispute be one between Libya and the international community, when international support is increasing daily for the Libyan position? This support is embodied in the support of regional and international organizations, the population of whose members exceeds two thirds of the world's population.

Those two Governments have now come up with a new lie. They say that Libya is defying international legality. The facts totally refute this. Libya is one of the countries most committed to international law. Proof of this is its implementation of the verdict of the International Court of Justice in its territorial dispute with Chad, even though this was not in our favour. Furthermore, officials in those two countries claim that Libya is not a peace-loving State. This is another lie. The Jamahiriya is a peace-loving country. It believes in peace and practices it. Its role in the peaceful settlement of disputes between States has been embodied in its active role in trying to achieve reconciliation between Sudan and Uganda. It has also been reflected in its successful efforts at reconciling the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front.

Raising what has become known as the Lockerbie crisis falls within the context of these false allegations and fabricated accusations. It confirms a fact that we have stated right from the beginning: that this is a premeditated, fabricated problem aimed at punishing the Libyan people for certain principles in which they believe and certain positions they defend. It is as if those who created this crisis were not content with the difficulties and pains which the Libyan people have already suffered at the hands of the colonialists and the fascists who, on our territory, fought a war that killed and displaced hundreds of thousands of Libyans, and planted in their farms and under their homes millions of land mines which still kill innocent people and impede Libya's efforts to protect the environment, combat desertification, and expand in the fields of economic and social development.

If the aim behind the fabrication of the crisis was not to punish us for certain principles we uphold and certain positions we defend, why did the two countries refuse from the start to apply the relevant international convention — the Montreal Convention? Why did they drag the Security Council into this legal problem, which has nothing whatsoever to do with its functions? Why did they hasten to impose sanctions on us only two months after the start of this crisis? How did these countries accord themselves the right to participate in the voting on Security Council resolution 731 (1992), in contravention of Article 27 (3) of the Charter? Why do the British and American Governments reject any initiative to settle the dispute by dialogue and negotiation? What is the justification for their intransigence in rejecting the proposal of the League of Arab States that was accepted by Libya? Why do these States insist on accusing our citizens when new facts have been uncovered and published in several books and newspapers refuting their claims and confirming that the incident was planned by professional intelligence services to coverup certain suspicious activities? Also, why did these States push the Security Council to adopt a double standard, imposing sanctions on Libya under Chapter VII of the Charter when it did not threaten anybody or in any way compromise international peace and security. At the same time, these countries prevented the Security Council from applying the same Chapter to a major power that sent hundreds of its war planes to attack our country and bomb our cities while their residents lay sleeping in their beds? This same big Power still practises State terrorism against us, freezing our financial assets and imposing unilateral sanctions on us, refusing to respond to General Assembly resolution 41/38, which calls on it to compensate our people for the losses they suffered as a result of its brutal aggression against us in April 1986.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has sought to settle the dispute. All it has asked for is that it be settled in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of international law. My country is satisfied because its handling of this crisis was supported by most countries of the world. And here I would like to pay tribute to the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic

Conference, the Organization of African Unity and the League of Arab States for their appreciation of our position and their understanding of our earnestness in seeking a quick and just solution. In particular, we would like to thank members of the Security Council who appreciated our response, tried to do us justice and sought to lift the unjust sanctions imposed on us.

The magnitude of the suffering of the Libyan people under the sanctions has been detailed in document S/1996/717. Suffice it to say that the sanctions have so far resulted in the deaths of 3,340 persons in road accidents. More than 12,000 persons have suffered serious permanent injuries because of these accidents. Moreover, the sanctions have cost more than $18 billion in material losses.

There is no excuse for condoning such injustice, and the continuation of this injustice is wrong. Most countries of the world have repeated their calls for an accelerated solution of the Lockerbie crisis, in accordance with international laws and conventions. The Jamahiriya has accepted that. The obstacle lies in the blind intransigence and illogical demands of the American and British Governments. Should the two Governments persist in their uncompromising positions, refuse to settle the dispute in a spirit of justice and fairness, and relieve the suffering our people have endured for more than four years, the only thing left to the Libyan people would be to appeal to those in this forum with clean consciences to intensify their efforts in order to expose the unjust practices exercised by the United States and Britain to extend the duration of the blockade imposed on a small people. Members of this Assembly should implement the decisions taken by the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement in Cartagena, by the Arab Heads of State at the Cairo summit and by the African Heads of State in the Yaoundé summit not to continue compliance with the sanctions resolutions. They should also consider possible ways of sparing the Libyan people more losses if the western countries persist in rejecting initiatives for a peaceful solution.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya attaches the utmost importance to the establishment of security and the enhancement of cooperation in the Mediterranean region. It reaffirms its conviction that stability in this area will be realized only through an end to military exercises in the Mediterranean, the closure of foreign military bases, the withdrawal of foreign fleets and the development of a sound formula, refuting the policy of exclusion, that would enable the Mediterranean countries to contribute to the enhancement of their security and the promotion of cooperation. By virtue of its distinct location in that region and the stability it enjoys, the Jamahiriya can play an important role in strengthening security in the Mediterranean by reducing migration from the southern coastal States to the North and the elimination of destructive movements that exploit and have been repudiated by Islam for undermining the stability of a number of littoral countries of the Mediterranean. The Jamahiriya would be able to play a bigger role in these fields if the sanctions imposed on it were lifted and external attempts to undermine its security and stability were to stop.

My country supports the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons as a prelude to prohibiting and destroying all weapons of mass destruction. We welcome the international treaties and conventions concluded with a view to controlling these destructive weapons and their ultimate elimination. In particular, my country welcomes the conclusion of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. However, we believe that other measures should be taken to guarantee the total eradication of weapons of mass destruction, including a timetable for the destruction of these weapons. It is necessary to take drastic and punitive measures with regard to a major nuclear power that transported nuclear material to its own territory and still procrastinates in disposing of it under international supervision. It is also highly important to formulate an international instrument guaranteeing the security and safety of non-nuclear States. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty recently approved by the General Assembly falls short of the aspirations of the peoples of the world to a total ban on all nuclear tests. As formulated, the Treaty merely perpetuates the status quo. It could even pre-empt efforts aimed at achieving a world totally free from nuclear terror. In the context of other steps that should be taken to eliminate nuclear weapons, it is essential to take serious international measures to guarantee the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Jamahiriya has a special interest in this question because the region in which we live is greatly threatened by the fact that the Israelis possess terrifying nuclear weapons with over 200 nuclear warheads. They also have nuclear facilities that they refuse to place under international control. What adds to our concern is the fact that, in addition to the Israeli nuclear terror which threatens the lives of the residents of Arab cities and villages every day, a major nuclear Power not only turns a blind eye to this terror, but even works to develop and enhance it. This same major Power threatens any Arab

country, even if it was merely building a pharmaceutical product factory under the pretext of saving the world from chemical weapons.

The existence of the Israeli nuclear arsenal cannot be taken lightly or condoned. If the international community is truly keen to ensure the security and stability of our region, it should take measures to guarantee Israel's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the placing of their nuclear facilities under the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards system. There must also be a timetable for dismantling their nuclear stockpiles. Should the failure to force Israel to do that continue, it would be legitimate for the countries in the area to acquire, in self-defence, means to guarantee their safety and enable them to face the Israeli nuclear threat to their very existence.

The world has witnessed colossal changes. If we are to adapt to these changes, we must restructure the United Nations to make it better able to respond to international needs and to meet the interests and wishes of Member States.

My country has followed the negotiations aimed at strengthening the United Nations system and at reforming the Security Council. We believe that this process, pursued by Member States for some time now, should be accelerated and concluded, resulting in measures that could enhance the powers of the General Assembly, including on matters of international peace and security.

We urge that the negotiations lead to steps that would enable the Security Council better to carry out its mandate, in conformity with the principles and purposes of the Charter. Any increase in the membership of the Security Council should be based not on a selective approach, but on the principles of the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographic distribution, taking into consideration the interests of the developing countries that constitute the majority of United Nations Member States. The veto privilege, which has become the focus of interest of most countries, should be at the core of the reform process. There is no longer any justification for maintaining this privilege. The new international arena needs a democratic Security Council, not one in which the few enjoy discriminatory rights. My country, which has been in the forefront of those calling for the abrogation of the veto power, once again urges that the measures aimed at reforming the Security Council include arrangements ultimately leading to the elimination of this privilege, which contradicts the principle of sovereign equality of States and also runs counter to democracy. Preserving it would impede the Organizations's efforts to maintain and preserve international peace and security.

The world cannot be secure until its economic problems and development are addressed. Looking at the international scene, we find that the economies and level of growth of most developing countries continue to languish. It is no exaggeration to state that these conditions may deteriorate further if effective measures are not taken to reverse them. The Charter of the United Nations is anchored on two basic pillars: the maintenance of international peace and security and international cooperation for economic and social development. The close connection between the two pillars requires the United Nations to strive to achieve both equally.

We believe that no sound international economic environment can be possible without a true world partnership for development. This requires that North-South dialogue be resumed and that the developing countries be enabled to participate effectively in making decisions affecting international economic conditions. In this context, commitments for promoting development in developing countries should be undertaken in a realistic manner that would end trade protectionism against the exports of developing countries, lift restrictions on the transfer of technology to them and ensure the payment of remunerative prices for their commodities.

It is essential that special priority be given to the economic situation in Africa and to the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. The western countries have a moral duty to help end underdevelopment in Africa, given the continent's suffering under colonialism, when its wealth was plundered by these countries, which stole its natural resources and denied it opportunities for development and progress.

As part of the efforts of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in the areas of economic development, environmental protection, expansion of agrarian reform and the provision of drinking water, the Libyan people, in the midst of their joy at the start of the twenty-eighth year of the 1 September revolution, have celebrated the conclusion of the second phase of the Great Man-Made River Project, whose waters have reached the city of Tripoli, where there is a dense population and arable land. The Libyan people have realized this achievement despite the ongoing embargo and the coercive economic practices imposed on it for over a decade. These

measures were recently tightened by a law whose provisions are applicable to the companies of States that deal with us. This constitutes a flagrant violation of the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and an intentional disregard for the rules of international law. It is also a clear contradiction of the Agreement establishing the World Trade Organization.

My country has followed with keen interest the reactions of anger and denunciation following the enactment of that law. We would like to express our satisfaction at the inclusion of an item on this matter on the General Assembly's agenda for this session. We hope that member States will discuss this question, study it carefully and ultimately adopt a measure to thwart this law, through which the United States of America is attempting to impose its laws on the international community. This Assembly should take the necessary effective measures to end all coercive economic arrangements being imposed on a number of developing countries, in implementation of the General Assembly resolutions prohibiting any country from enacting extra-territorial laws or resorting to coercive measures to force another country to relinquish the exercise of its sovereign rights.

The next century is but a few years away. Before it begins, all the members of the international community should use the remaining time to eliminate all remnants of recent decades, which were characterized by tension and confrontation. As we enter the third millennium, we should live in a world governed by a system based on justice, equality and respect for the political and economic choices of peoples. Such a system should embody full commitment to international law and the principles and purposes of the United Nations. It must protect and enhance human rights and strengthen efforts aimed at eradicating poverty, suffering, discord, conflicts, disputes and wars. It should be a system in which no country can aspire to hegemony or abuse its influence, a system that supports the peaceful settlement of disputes. It should give all peoples the opportunity to look to the future with optimism.

The United Nations remains the most valid forum and the best tool for building a world consensus in this respect. Let us reform and strengthen this Organization so that it will be able to meet these requirements, all of which emanate from its aims and purposes — the establishment of peace and security, and the promotion of economic and social development in the interests of progress, welfare and prosperity for future generations.

**The Acting President:** The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, His Excellency Mr. Vahan Papazian.

**Mr. Papazian** (Armenia): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. Given his talent and experience, I am confident that he will guide this session to a successful completion of the noble mission entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations.

I would also like to express my appreciation and thanks to his predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas Do Amaral, for his outstanding leadership in accomplishing the tasks of the last session.

The end of the cold war has given a decisive impetus to globalization by offering former socialist economies the opportunity to assume their rightful place in the world economy. The challenges posed by extremely rapid transformation are nowhere more graphically depicted than in the current transition of the countries of Eastern and Central Europe and in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

In addition to severe economic and social problems resulting from the extraordinary changes buffeting the country, the transition process in Armenia has been exacerbated by the transport and energy blockade by neighbouring Azerbaijan, the devastation caused by the massive earthquake of 1988, the conflict between Nagorny-Karabakh and Azerbaijan and the presence of more than 300,000 refugees.

Despite such serious circumstances, economic reforms begun after the declaration of independence in 1991 have been continued and expanded over the past year. Having achieved a fair degree of economic stability, the Government of Armenia has designed a medium-term economic programme for 1996-1998. Armenia's medium-term policy objectives are to maintain financial stability and establish the institutions and mechanisms of a market economy by the end of the programme period in order to lay the foundation for sustainable growth and a viable balance of payments. Consistent with this strategy, the main macroeconomic objectives of the programme are to raise the economic growth rate from 5 per cent in 1995 to 7 per cent in 1998; to lower inflation to 8 per cent by the end of 1998; and to narrow the current account deficit from 26 per cent of the gross domestic product in 1995 to 12 per cent

in 1998. To cope with the social pressures involved in the transition process, the reorientation of social expenditures towards the most vulnerable remains a high-priority task. The programme lays emphasis on improving the targeting of the social safety net and intensifying efforts to rationalize social expenditures.

While each country is responsible for its own economic policies for development, in accordance with its specific situation and conditions, the reactivation of economic growth and development in all countries requires a concerted effort of the international community. Here, particular attention should be given to the needs of the countries with economies in transition, without this affecting development assistance to the developing countries.

The completion of the transition process, the integration of these countries into the world economy and their effective involvement in the multilateral institutions will have a positive impact not only on these countries themselves, but also on the global economy.

As we approach the twenty-first century, it is the collective responsibility of the international community to ensure that, within the multidimensional and integrated character of its mandate, the United Nations system is equipped to show leadership in the fulfilment of the commitments made to international cooperation for development.

In this context, the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa exemplifies the system's commitment to collaborative action and its renewed commitment to supporting Africa's development. Launched last March by the Secretary-General, this Initiative is the largest coordinated action in the history of the United Nations. While it is clear that the implementation of the Initiative will be led at the country level by Governments, the United Nations agencies will hold themselves mutually accountable for achieving this Initiative's goals.

The United Nations, in cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, other bodies of the United Nations system, including its specialized agencies, and the World Trade Organization, has a key role in fostering greater coherence, complementarity and coordination in global economic policy-making. The General Assembly should exert greater policy leadership on development issues inasmuch as the Charter of the United Nations provides the Assembly with broad mandates concerning these issues. In accordance with relevant provisions of the Charter, the Economic and Social Council must continue to strengthen its role as the central mechanism for coordinating the policies and activities of the United Nations, its specialized agencies and funds in the economic, social and related fields. It should provide overall guidance and coordination to the United Nations development system. The Council must also promote a coordinated follow-up to the outcomes of major international conferences.

Recommendations adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its 1996 substantive session on strengthening collaboration between the United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions and on new arrangements for consultations with non-governmental organizations represented a great step forward.

Modern democracy is the political counterpart of the market economic system, and the two go hand in hand. The success of a democracy requires informed and civil discourse and respect for the rule of law and the democratic process, including the expression of the public will through free and fair elections.

The recent, vigorously contested presidential election signalled the vitality of the democratic process in Armenia. President Levon Ter-Petrossian's re-election demonstrates the will of the people in support of the policies pursued thus far by the Government, based on a clear programme and an achievable plan of development.

Development cannot be attained in the absence of respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Armenia strongly supports the High Commissioner for Human Rights in his efforts to restructure the Centre for Human Rights. The Member States must continue working towards better coordination within the Centre and consolidation of human-rights functions within the United Nations system.

Armenia considers self-determination in its multitude of manifestations to be an inalienable human right. In this light, the Nagorny Karabakh conflict continues to concern the Government of Armenia and its peaceful resolution remains Armenia's top foreign-policy priority. A few months ago, on 12 May, we marked the second anniversary of the cease-fire in the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. At the same time, the parties to the conflict released all prisoners of war and hostages identified by the International Committee of the Red Cross. We consider these developments encouraging and conducive to the overall peace process and to the establishment of a favourable atmosphere for negotiations.

Negotiations among the parties within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group on a political agreement continued during the past year. We believe that the signing of the agreement provides the best hope for consolidating the cease-fire and making the peace process irreversible. The elements of the political agreement, and most importantly the security provisions for Nagorny Karabakh, will eventually comprise an inseparable part of any settlement, regardless of the ultimate status of Nagorny Karabakh.

Also this year, the parties took an extra step to establish a second negotiating track through immediate and direct contacts, as mandated by the December 1995 meeting of the OSCE Council of Ministers in Budapest. Thus far, several rounds of talks have taken place between Armenia and Azerbaijan in which general aspects of key issues have been discussed. We are hopeful that the representative of Nagorny Karabakh will join in upcoming rounds, for we strongly believe that no final solution can be achieved without Karabakh's direct participation in the deliberations.

The peaceful resolution of the Karabakh conflict remains Armenia's first priority. Armenia is committed to the talks on both tracks and will remain constructively engaged in both processes. We believe that these two tracks compliment each other and that any progress we make on either can only positively impact the other, ultimately leading to a breakthrough.

During the past five years, Armenia has experienced first hand how war, armed conflict and regional instability in general can hamper economic progress and development. Thus, I would like to reiterate Armenia's commitment to maintaining the existing cease-fire, while eagerly searching for a solution based on good will, mutual compromise and understanding.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction poses a serious threat to both global and regional security and stability. The adoption last month by the General Assembly of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty represented the international community's determination to bring to a completion one of the most sought after non-proliferation and disarmament measures in the history of this Organization. It gave me much satisfaction to sign the Treaty earlier today on behalf of the Government and people of Armenia.

Virtually all States Members of the United Nations favour an increase in the membership of the Security Council, reflecting the radical changes in the world and the increase in the Organization's overall membership. However, during the discussions in the Open-ended Working Group, wide support has been expressed for the view that, if there is no agreement on other categories of membership, expansion should take place, for the time being, in the non-permanent category alone. Armenia favours an increase in the non-permanent membership of the Council that would incorporate the interests of all the regional Groups and correspond to the principle of equitable geographic distribution.

In order to carry out its activities, the United Nations needs financial means. The financing of the Organization is the collective responsibility of all Member States and Armenia is not indifferent to the financial situation of the United Nations.

I would like to assure the Assembly that Armenia will do its best to fulfil its financial obligations. However, there is an urgent need to adopt a global package of measures to solve the grave financial situation of the United Nations. These measures should contemplate, *inter alia*, review of the scale of assessments so that it would reflect as accurately as possible the principle of capacity to pay.

Allow me to conclude by wishing the General Assembly every success in the demanding work it faces during this session, and by pledging Armenia's most active and effective cooperation with the delegations of other States.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate for this meeting.

A number of delegations have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Abolhassani Shahreza** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Today the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates levelled a number of baseless allegations and raised unacceptable claims against the territorial integrity of my country. These claims have no historical or legal foundation. We have made our position in this regard very clear on previous occasions. Moreover, we do not really see any genuine usefulness in a rhetorical approach to this issue, whether in the General Assembly or in

other international gatherings. Indeed, these considerations will make my remarks very brief.

As noted before, we are against any measure which could cause instability in the Persian Gulf region. The people of the region are still suffering from the consequences of the wars and miscalculations of the recent past. While fully aware of the sensitivity of the Persian Gulf region, the Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to respect and maintain peace, security and tranquillity in that region.

Therefore, we believe that the misunderstandings that have arisen in bilateral relations can be addressed with good will. We continue to be determined to maintain and promote brotherly and good-neighbourly relations between the two countries. We are, fortunately, backed by a history of cordial and friendly relations with the United Arab Emirates. We are confident that the existing misunderstanding will be resolved in our bilateral talks in a neighbourly atmosphere.

In this context, we welcome the readiness of the United Arab Emirates, put forth in the statement today, to engage in bilateral discussions without any preconditions by either side.

**Mr. Gnehm** (United States of America): The statement made today by the Head of the delegation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya is yet another example of Libya's constant campaign to try to turn its international obligations into an issue between States. This is not an issue between States. Nor, as it was just alleged, has the Security Council adopted a so-called double standard with respect to Libya. What it has adopted is a principled stand against States which sponsor terrorism. The issue is Libyan failure to comply with international obligations imposed on Libya by the Security Council. Those obligations are clear. Those obligations have not changed. So-called compromises offered by Libya are unacceptable. There can be no negotiation between Libya and the Security Council on the fulfilment of Chapter VII obligations.

Libya's refusal to meet the requirements of the Security Council shows the measure of its regard for the United Nations. Evasion of these requirements will not bring a solution to the problem between Libya and the world of nations. The Government of Libya knows what needs to be done to bring an end to sanctions: full compliance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. The sooner it does this, the better for all.

The Head of the delegation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya raised the subject of United States law related to sanctions on Libya. A preference to act multilaterally and for consultation with other Governments is built into our law. In implementing it, the Administration of the United States of America will be mindful of our international obligations. This act is designed to deter, not to punish, and to help guard the international system from the threat posed by Libyan support for terrorism.

**Mr. Hollis** (United Kingdom): In his speech, the head of the delegation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya referred to the bombings of Pan American flight 103 and UTA flight 772 — terrorist incidents in which 441 people from 27 separate States Members of the United Nations were murdered.

I would like to take this opportunity to re-state my Government's position. Libya is once again trying to cloud the issue at hand. This is not about a dispute between the Libyan Government and a number of countries. It is about the need for the international community to respond to acts of international terrorism, and about the consistent failure of the Libyan Government to comply fully with Security Council resolutions 731 (1992), 748 (1992) and 883 (1993).

Compliance with Security Council resolutions under Chapter VII is an obligation of all States Members of the United Nations. The United Kingdom seeks no more, and no less, than that Libya demonstrate its respect for the United Nations and the international community by complying fully with the relevant resolutions. It is not for Libya to try to negotiate with the Security Council about its obligations under Chapter VII of the Charter. These obligations are clearly set out in the resolutions. So-called compromises offered by the Libyans, and referred to in the Libyan representative's speech, are not acceptable.

It is for the Security Council — not for the Libyan Government — to decide on measures necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is for the Libyan Government to abide by these decisions — promptly and in full.

**Ms. Gazeau-Secret** (France) (*interpretation from French*): The French delegation feels that it must set out some facts and clarify certain points in connection with the statement made by the Libyan Foreign Minister, Mr. Omar Mustafa Muntasser.

The attack on UTA flight 772 and the attack against Pan American flight 103 at Lockerbie are not disputes between Libya and three Member States. Rather, they are a dispute between Libya and the Security Council. Security Council resolutions 731 (1992), 748 (1992) and 843 (1993) describe what the Council expects of the Libyan authorities.

The proposal made by the League of Arab States, which was mentioned by the Libyan Foreign Minister, is not an appropriate response to the requirements of the Security Council in connection with the terrorist act perpetrated against Pan American flight 103.

As regards UTA flight 772, the French delegation confirms that the visit to Tripoli by the French magistrate in charge of the investigation of 5-16 July 1996 went smoothly. The magistrate stated he was satisfied with the cooperation of the Libyan authorities during his visit there. My delegation hopes that the results of the visit will make it possible to make progress in implementing the Security Council resolutions, and that the Libyan authorities will continue their efforts to act in accordance with all their obligations in connection with both UTA flight 772 and Pan Am flight 103. Only the fulfilment of their obligations will make it possible for the sanctions imposed by the Security Council to be lifted.

**Mr. Samhan** (United Arab Emirates) (*interpretation from Arabic*): In responding to the statement by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the 25-year-long Iranian occupation of the three islands — Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa — which belong to the United Arab Emirates, I wish to state that since its establishment my country has pursued a policy based on peaceful coexistence, good neighbourliness, rejection of the use or threat of use of force and resort to peaceful means in the settlement of disputes, in keeping with the holy principles of Islam, as well as the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and other international instruments.

My country has always rejected the Iranian occupation of the three islands. We have called on the Iranian Government to resolve the dispute over the islands through bilateral negotiations or mediation by the International Court of Justice.

The United Arab Emirates has responded to all the good offices of many friendly and brotherly countries in an attempt to resolve the dispute peacefully. The latest instance was our response to an invitation to participate in a group of experts in Qatar in 1995, in order to agree on an agenda for bilateral negotiations between the two countries to resolve the dispute on the three islands peacefully. However, the Iranian Government insisted on secondary issues, unrelated to the question, thus showing a lack of seriousness and readiness to tackle the issue on a bilateral level.

Historical facts contradict the Iranian Government's claims. Indeed, they raise the question of how these three islands can be Iranian when the Iranian Government itself resorted to an attempt to purchase them or rent them as far back as 1929. They then proceeded to occupy the three islands in 1971.

In his statement on 23 September 1996, the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran said:

> "the Islamic Republic of Iran has continued to articulate and pursue initiatives and measures aimed at fostering greater regional confidence; enhancing respect for principles of international law; bringing about transparency in armaments and reduction of military spending; creating zones free from weapons of mass destruction; strengthening peace and security through persistent endeavours to encourage and facilitate understanding and conciliation; and consolidating economic cooperation." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 4th meeting, p. 28)*

This statement contradicts Iranian behaviour. In recent years, there has been an attempt to promote and strengthen military control over the three islands, including the stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction and the entrenchment of the occupation of the three islands. This belies any claims to transparency in armaments or to conciliation and cooperation. The United Arab Emirates Government hopes that this declaration of position by the Iranian Foreign Minister in his statement to the General Assembly will be translated into reality, particularly, as it relates to the three islands, through a review by Iran of its unacceptable policies in the light of current regional and international developments and in response to our initiatives calling for unconditional bilateral negotiations or resort to the International Court of Justice to reach a just settlement ending Iranian occupation of our three islands and achieving the aspirations of peoples of the region to a new era of bilateral and collective relations in the interest of

economic and social development, as well as regional and international peace and security.

**Mr. Muntasser** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) *(interpretation from Arabic):* I wish to comment on the statements made by the representatives of the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

We have become accustomed to this kind of talk from the representative of the United States of America. This is not the first time, following a Libyan statement, that we have heard the same old story: that the dispute between Libya and the United States is a dispute between Libya and the Security Council.

I will not go on at length at this late hour. I would only like to reconfirm to the Assembly that Libya has responded in time to the Security Council resolutions, and in particular resolution 731 (1992), whose provisions have been implemented. We have denounced terrorism and have cooperated with the United Kingdom on the issues on which our cooperation was requested, in particular with regard to the Irish Republican Army. We have also cooperated with France. As the Assembly heard from the representative of France a while ago, there was a visit to Libya by a magistrate, who made contacts and carried out an investigation. The representative of France declared, as did the representative of the United Kingdom last year, that Libya has cooperated in that regard.

With regard to the dispute between Libya and the Security Council, I would like to note that the League of Arab States decision, which has been supported and accepted by Libya, has also been supported and accepted by many international organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity, which has more than 50 members. The Non-Aligned Movement, with a membership of over 100, has also supported that decision. It has also been supported by the Organization of the Islamic Conference, with more than 50 members. The whole world, even some Security Council members, support the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya's position.

What remains to be done in implementation of Security Council resolution 731 (1992) is to deport the detainees, or the accused, and Libya rejects that notion. We have contributed as much as we can to all attempts to find a peaceful resolution to the dispute. We have accepted the League of Arab States proposal to have the accused tried in a neutral setting before the International Court of Justice and by Scottish judges in accordance with Scottish laws. All these proposals have been rejected by those two countries. We absolutely cannot deport our citizens in violation of our national laws. We do not have extradition treaties with those two countries. We are prepared to have the accused tried in a neutral setting, not in the atmosphere prevailing in the United States and the United Kingdom.

All that has been said by the representatives of the United States and of the United Kingdom is but an attempt to avoid the facts. This is not an international dispute. As the Libyan Foreign Minister made clear, such a position is contrary to fact. How could this be an international dispute when Libya's position enjoys international support from countries representing more than two thirds of the world's population?

I shall not go into the details, but I would like to state to the representative of the United States that a law such as the D'Amato law is not at all helpful. Suffice it to recall what the representative of France said here; all of us know that she was referring to the D'Amato law. The United States of America wants to impose its national laws on other countries; it wants its national laws to transcend its national boundaries; it wants them applied to other countries. Suffice it to recall what the French Ambassador and many other speakers have said, and the disapproval of the news media. I do not wish to respond to the representative of France, because the response is contained in her own statement. And I would like to thank France for that.

*The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.*